

Life Off the Streets Executive Board

Thursday 9 March 2023

Minutes

In attendance

London Councils Deputy Chair (Housing and Planning)/Labour Group representative – Cllr Darren Rodwell (Chairing)
Liberal Democrat Group representative – Cllr Jayne McCoy
Conservative Group representative – Mayor Jason Perry
Senior Advisor to the Mayor (Health Policy) – Dr Tom Coffey
GLA, Greater London Authority – David Eastwood, Emma de Zoete, Natalie Daniels, Lidia Estevez-Picon, Luke Oates, David Orton
LC, London Councils – Michelle Binfield, Amy Withey, Ben Ridley-Johnson (minutes)
DLUHC, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities – Penny Hobman, Tom Preest
ADPH London – Rachel Flowers
HMPPS – Kilvinder Vigurs
Crisis – Matthew Downie
St Mungo's – Emma Haddad
Thames Reach – Bill Tidnam
Homeless Link – Peter Smith
Westminster City Council – Heather Clarke
Bloomberg Associates – Tamiru Mammo

Apologies

Ligia Teixeira (CHI)
Rick Henderson (Homeless Link)
Neil Wightman (Westminster City Council)
Beverley Tarka (ADASS)
Paul Calaminus (East London NHS)
Izzy Connell (DLUHC)

1) Welcome and Introductions

Cllr. Rodwell welcomed the members and guests to the meeting and noted apologies and thanked those delegates attending in their places.

He noted with regret that after being a valued member since the first Exec Board meetings, Cllr Jayne McCoy was standing down from her position on the Board as a consequence of her decision to step-down from the Mayor's Homes for London Board. He thanked her for her commitment to housing and homelessness over a number of years and to rough sleeping on this Board more recently. Cllr Jim Millard will attend for the Liberal Democrat Group moving forward.

2) Minutes and Matters Arising (7 December 2022 meeting)

Cllr. Rodwell asked and all agreed that the minutes presented for the last meeting were a true and accurate record. The agenda paper showed the latest position on the matters arising from last time. All were being picked up within the Life Off the Streets work programme and Cllr. Rodwell advised that any questions on this or the wider work programme could be directed to Michelle and team.

He reminded the attendees that we intend to invite the Rough Sleeping Minister (Felicity Buchan) to the next meeting to talk about the challenges we are facing and the work we need to do together this year.

3) Annual Report to Board on Work, Challenges, Successes and Future Work

The agenda item and the four presentations reflected on the past year's achievements, before moving on to focus on the challenges faced in London in meeting the goal to end rough sleeping. Those presenting ran through some of the current and planned work being taking forward by the programme and its partners and Cllr. Rodwell asked the Board to use this time to consider and identify what else we should be doing – whether that is in terms of activity, interventions, changing the way we use resources, lobbying, or anything else.

Please see slides circulated to Board members and guests for content of each presentation.

Pillar 1 Data: Better Defining and Measuring Rough Sleeping in London

Presentation by Tamiru Mammo to Board on programme's achievements, challenges, priority activities for 2023/24 regarding improving the availability of and use of data in support of efforts to prevent, tackle and understand rough sleeping in London.

Members discussed the presentation and asks, underlining the importance of high quality and improving data about rough sleeping in the capital as well as of developing clear, sophisticated messaging around what the evidence points to.

Jamie Carswell highlighted the critical importance of the new Strategic Insights Tool in terms of boosting our understanding and ability to intervene and take action in the right places.

Bill Tidnam highlighted the importance of using data to understand the journeys into and out of rough sleeping and not to forget the importance of data in telling the story we need to about what more we need to do to end rough sleeping.

Matthew Downie highlighted the importance of using data we already have to lobby for change (eg: all the available data that suggests that LHA levels in London are a real driver of homelessness and rough sleeping).

David Eastwood highlighted the importance of being careful about how we use data to make sure it is properly understood by the public and others not so well versed in the nuances of the differing datasets. It can sometimes look like datasets on rough sleeping contradict each other.

Pillar 2 Prevention: Better Prevention of People Rough Sleeping in London

Presentation by Jamie Carswell to Board on programme's achievements, challenges, priority activities for 2023/24 regarding reducing the flow of new and returning rough sleepers in London.

Members discussed the presentation and asks, underlining the importance of doing more to prevent the need to sleep rough to access services and better understanding the routes and transition points into rough sleeping.

Matt Downie offered to speak with Jamie Carswell regarding the prevention agenda conversation between housing associations and local authorities.

Action: Cllr. Rodwell asked Jamie Carswell to progress a conversation with key housing association leaders around the role of local authorities and housing providers in reducing tenancy loss, a factor causing a proportion of some rough sleeping in London.

Tom Coffey raised his concerns regarding the risks for the programme relating to hospital discharge - the loss of associated funding and the extent to which this might impact prevention efforts.

Rachel Flowers supported the prevention agenda strongly in her comments and emphasised the piece around tenancy sustainment, adding to that her knowledge that wrap-around support could be essential for some individual ex-rough sleepers to maintain long-term housing and recovery outcomes.

Cllr Jayne McCoy suggested work could be done on making the value for money case for prevention.

Penny Hobman and Tom Preest (both DLUHC) thanked Jamie for the presentation and set out their support for the work going on and planned, as well as adding that in the future they supported work that could be done beyond Housing and Support, including that focused on community activity and strengthening individual's relationships to assist with preventing people falling into rough sleeping situations.

Pillar 3 Intervention: Earlier and More Effective Intervention to Support People out of Rough Sleeping

Presentation by Pete Smith from Homeless Link to Board on programme's achievements, challenges, priority activities for 2023/24 in relation to how we can more effectively support people off the streets in a sustainable and rapid way.

Bill Tidnam commented on the importance of outreach workers' role in first meeting individual rough sleepers' immediate needs, which then enabled more meaningful and effective offers to be discussed with them. The limitations could be in practice, a lack of meaningful offers for those with limited or no recourse and, sometimes, a lack of engagement. He suggested we needed to continue working on these factors collectively.

David Eastwood highlighted to the Exec Board the importance of on-going conversations about where services were best placed in terms of borough, sub-regional and pan-London. These conversations were on-going and as a programme and Exec Board we should be pleased with the focus on ensuring that interventions were as powerful as they could be in ending rough sleeping.

Rachel Flowers commented on the continuing importance of evidence-based approaches to specific issues within the focus of the programme.

Jamie Carswell flagged the importance of thinking about the long-term with the research, work and services that the programme was driving and contributing to.

Michelle Binfield briefed the Exec Board on three of the intervention related areas that the programme would continue to develop more this year: the social care workstream, the NUKN workstream and tenancy sustainment, something connected to SHAP developing.

Pillar 4 Recovery: More Informed, Effective Support to Support People to Stay in Stable Housing

Presentation by David Eastwood and Emma de Zoete (GLA) to Board on programme's achievements, challenges, priority activities for 2023/24

Cllr. McCoy made the comment that it was incumbent on those with influence and position to ensure that ending rough sleeping remained something that was a shared effort for all partners involved. Cllr. Rodwell supported this point.

In the final, collecting stage of discussion, it was proposed to and agreed by Cllr. Rodwell that a key area of focus for the LOTS programme this year was to push on with advancing the rare and non-recurrent focused prevention workstream, building on existing research and activity from the year reviewed.

Cllr. Rodwell closed the discussion by thanking the presenters and praising the cross-party, pan-London work the programme had achieved and was continuing to focus on to end rough sleeping in London.

4) AOB

Lidia Estevez-Picon provided an update on the Home Office Streamlined Asylum Process to the Exec Board.

Note: The risks associated with this in terms of increasing rough sleeping in London were added to the Programme Risk Register and a substantial item including information updates from Home Office officials and questions from the programme workstream team was planned for the next Life off the Streets Core Group meeting.

Rachel Flowers (ADPH) stated the importance of all partners including ADASS and ADPH co-ordinating in meetings and work join-up on the wider asylum piece.

Action: Follow up meetings with GLA, LC, NHS, ADPH, to coordinate on this area moving forward.

Action: Report to be provided to Exec Board ahead of next meeting.

5) Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 15 June 2023, 15:00 – 17:00. Deputy Mayor Tom Copley Chairing.